

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD  
OFFICE OF MARINE SAFETY

In the Matter of:

"FIRE ON BOARD M/V COLUMBIA"

Date of Fire June 6, 2000

Docket No.:  
DCA00MM030

Recorded Interview: JEFFREY HURST

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and Public Facilities  
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On Board  
M/V COLUMBIA  
Juneau, Alaska

June 9, 2000

BEFORE:

Ms. Terry Weaver  
NTSB Investigator  
Survival Factors Group Chairman

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. HURST: Jeffrey Hurst, Safety Officer for  
the Alaska Marine Highway System.

E X A M I N A T I O N

By Ms. Terry Weaver:

Q Okay, Mr. Hurst, what are your  
responsibilities as the Safety Officer?

A Working with various Federal and State  
regulations, both land-based and marine-based safety  
equipment, safety training, fire-fighting, et cetera,  
including environmental.

Q Were you involved in the accident, in the  
response to the engine room fire on board the Columbia?

A Yes. I was called to help man the emergency  
response team center on the third floor of the DOT  
building.

Q Were you following any type of plan?

A The plan was out on the table and I was  
called up to assist in getting the various things that  
needed to be done to respond to the situation on the  
Columbia.

Q So you were given particular assignments that  
you will follow any time there's an emergency involving  
any of the vessels?

A That's correct.

1           Q       Okay. After you were notified -- first, how  
2       were you notified?

3           A       I had the Port Captain come by me and tell me  
4       the situation with the Columbia and that the emergency  
5       response team was being set up in the command center up  
6       on the third floor of the conference room, in the third  
7       floor of the DOT Building. And to grab a certain  
8       amount of things, you know, papers, pens or whatever I  
9       could get at the time, and go up there.

10                By the time I got up there, there was already  
11       communications established with the Columbia via cell  
12       phone.

13           Q       How many people make up the emergency  
14       response team from the company?

15           A       I think there are a total of seven people  
16       that make it up. That would be -- do you want me to--?

17           Q       Yes, run down the list.

18           A       The general manager, somebody from the  
19       Department of Transportation, normally, one of the  
20       assistant directors, so forth. The operations officer,  
21       the port captain, assistant port captain if we had one.  
22       We didn't have one. Myself, and then other personnel  
23       as needed, that we may need -- do we need somebody from  
24       Dispatch? Do we need somebody from the Steward  
25       section, you know, or Engineering? You bring them up.

1           The Marine Engineering Manager is also on the  
2       emergency response team as well as the senior port  
3       engineer.

4           Q       When the emergency happened, was anyone in  
5       contact with the master during the times you were  
6       responding? Were you notified?

7           A       When I finally got up to it, the command  
8       center had already been established. By the time I got  
9       up there, they were already on the phone with the  
10      master. They were on the speaker phone. They were  
11      talking with him basically getting the initial  
12      information as to what was taking place.

13                They set up a com schedule. They made sure  
14      they got counts on crew and passengers, where they  
15      were. Another thing I broke down and got was a chart.  
16      I said, okay, here's where they are to find out, you  
17      know, see what it is.

18                Then they established with the Taku, which  
19      was en route. The motor vessel Taku was en route. And  
20      everybody else, when I finally got there was starting  
21      to be assigned:

22                Okay, you take care of this aspect. You take  
23      care of this aspect. So we had other -- there was  
24      another com from besides the one I was in. You know,  
25      some people were getting on the phones to start making

1 arrangements to make calls to see what needed to be  
2 done.

3 I wasn't in the actual command center at all  
4 times.

5 Q What did you do after that?

6 A Well, helped take some notes or make sure we  
7 had a board. We had white sheets of paper up there and  
8 we had dry boards writing down all the information. I  
9 helped them write some of that down.

10 Then I started making some phone calls to see  
11 if certain -- made a phone call to a couple of people  
12 to find out if they were available to come in and  
13 assist, or to see if they got information.

14 Q Did you ever board the Columbia?

15 A The first time I boarded the Columbia was  
16 when we first came on board yesterday.

17 Q And what did you do at that time?

18 A I came up here to meet with the people to  
19 start talking about some interviews and go around and  
20 tour the ship. And then we went down and toured the  
21 engine room, the control booth.

22 Q What are your responsibilities with regard to  
23 the Columbia during routine operations?

24 A Helped coordinate working with all the  
25 department heads on any of the various training aspects

1 that may be involved, unless it's specific with the  
2 departmental manager back there. I work with the  
3 Department of Managers also to help coordinate  
4 training.

5 Receipt of safety equipment or safety items.

6 Typical would be PPE, personal protection equipment;  
7 your fire-fighting equipment that goes on board the  
8 ships. And the various Maritime safety equipment. You  
9 know, life rings, buoys, beacons, et cetera.

10 Q And how does that work? Do you do that based  
11 on information provided by one of the crew members if  
12 there's a problem with life-saving equipment? How does  
13 that work? Is it a yearly cycle or whenever it comes  
14 time to service them?

15 Do they contact you or shore-side?

16 A Typically, depending on the department. If  
17 it's Deck Department, they'll normally go to the port  
18 captain. And as I said before, they don't have an  
19 assistant port captain, so I've been assisting the  
20 assistant port captain.

21 You know, when stock requests come in for  
22 some items, you know, I take a look at it, help her  
23 process them so that then, she'll say, yeah, here we  
24 go. That's this ship, that ship, you know, whichever  
25 one of the nine vessels we have, they send it in.

1           Then we process and go up to our supplies so  
2   they can order and then get it to the ship.

3       Q     If there's any maintenance problems or, say,  
4   there was a problem with a particular -- with a group  
5   of life jackets or something.

6           Who would take care of the maintenance of  
7   that equipment?

8       A     Well, first, we'd get something from the  
9   ship. We'd get something from the ship that says we  
10   have a problem with this item. You know, five of the  
11   500 life jackets we have.

12           Then we would either get a stock request or  
13   I'd do one via the port captain, or somebody would do a  
14   stock draft up from there. Say, okay, order five  
15   replacements.

16           If we have spares in the warehouse or if we  
17   can get them from somewhere else, we look at those  
18   aspects also to expedite getting them what they need.

19       Q     Do you know the procedure on the Columbia for  
20   accounting for passengers that board? Like you said,  
21   they had to account for passengers. They gave your  
22   numbers of the number of people who were on board.

23       A     One of the people that's also on the  
24   emergency response team is the manager of our  
25   reservation of Marketing. They ran off a printout, and



1 I don't know what the printout is called.

2 But it had a list of names. I never actually  
3 saw it, and it had a total number.

4 So we take a look at that and get a report  
5 back from the ship that says, okay, just make sure they  
6 both jive because I know there was -- what? Four Coast  
7 Guard additional people? I think that went on board.

8 So we're trying to count, you know, make sure  
9 we have an accurate account of everyone on board. So  
10 she had that. And then the ship, the Columbia, said,  
11 okay, we have x-number of passengers, x-number of crew.

12 Then, when they went from the Columbia to the  
13 Taku, we had x-number of passengers go from the  
14 Columbia to the Taku, and x-number of crew members.

15 Q Did you have any interaction with any of the  
16 passengers?

17 A That night, when the Taku got in, yes.

18 Q And what was your involvement?

19 A I was out there to assist with the various  
20 Department of Managers and other officials with the  
21 Marine Highway, and interacting with the passengers to  
22 make sure that we had the coordination of where they  
23 were going to be sleeping that night.

24 You know, what arrangements we were making to  
25 get them on another vessel to get out, to go where they

1     wanted to go, and their vehicles and their personal  
2     belongings.

3             I never actually gave any of the  
4     presentations, but I was helping to gather information  
5     and just switch it back and forth because they had the  
6     various groups broken down into four different  
7     locations on the Taku.

8             Q     There were three people reportedly taken to  
9     the hospital. Were you aware of that?

10            A     Yes, because I was one of them that took one  
11     of the people to the hospital to get replacement  
12     medication. She had various illnesses or ailments. I  
13     never did get an accurate information.

14                   But she had to go to the hospital, so I ended  
15     up taking -- she had to go actually the emergency room  
16     because there was no pharmacy available to give her  
17     replacement medication.

18                   She was an Alaska Native so she had to go  
19     through the emergency room. That was one of the things  
20     that she has to do. Went there. They saw her. They  
21     verified her medication.

22                   Gave her I think an evening and a morning's  
23     dosage of all the medication. I didn't hear all which  
24     medications they were.

25                   At the same time, I know that D. Dutra, one

1 of our admin assistants who helps dispatch the licensed  
2 officers on board the ships, she ended up taking a lady  
3 to the emergency room to get replacement medication for  
4 her diabetes.

5 And the only one that I know of was when I  
6 knew about a person with -- I think it turned out to be  
7 an angina attack, stress-induced, that was taken from  
8 the Taku to Bartlett Hospital.

9 Q Do you have any medical facilities on the  
10 Columbia?

11 A We have a first aid room and our -- most all  
12 of our pursers on the vessels are trained as an ETT.

13 Q What does that stand for?

14 A Emergency Trauma Technician. Some of them  
15 may have gone up as high as EMT, emergency medical  
16 technician. And there may be other crew members that  
17 have ETT or EMT training.

18 Also on board, happened to be on board as a  
19 passenger, a medical doctor. I never got the name or  
20 what his specialty was. But he was there to help with  
21 them. And then I found out later that two fire  
22 department -- SITKA fire department fire-fighters who  
23 were both EMTs had come on board and were then being  
24 used to conduct triage, or just to see if anybody  
25 needed any help or treatment.

1           THE INTERVIEWER: Unless you have anything  
2 else to add, that's the only questions I have.

3           Do you have any questions?

4           BY ANOTHER INTERVIEWER, Mr. Bauer USCG:

5           Q     Is the Columbia covered under...

6           A     Yes.

7           Q     That was Mr. Bauer from the Coast Guard?

8           A     Uh-huh.

9           THE INTERVIEWER: Okay, is that it? Okay.  
10 Do you need any clarification?

11           (TAPE CONCLUDED.)

12